



Artist-Run Centres and
Collectives Conference

Conférence des collectifs
et des centres d'artistes
autogérés

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December 3, 2012

Ms Anne Valois
Director of Arts Disciplines Division
Canada Council for the Arts
350 Albert Street, P.O. 1047
Ottawa, ON K1P 5V8

Object : Appointment of Head, Visual Arts Section and Fair Notice Policy

Dear Madam,

As President and Director of the Artist-run Centres and Collectives Conference, we are writing to express our deep appreciation for Doug Sigurdson's commitment to the visual arts over the years and our mutually respectful working relationship. As an Officer, and then as Head of Visual Arts, he remained close to his roots as an artist, writer and worker in artist-run culture and was a strident defender of artists' need for self-determination and autonomy.

With the prevailing climate of change at Canada Council, ARCA would hope that the tradition to recruit senior staff personnel from within their respective disciplines will be upheld; we strongly believe that the ideal candidate for the position will have a deep understanding of the critical role that artist-run centres play in the increasingly intricate visual arts ecology as aptly described in the Burgess Report.

In the present absence of a Head of Visual Arts, we would like to take this opportunity to raise a concern that is shared by our membership concerning the upcoming review of operating programs that was announced at the latest NASO meeting of October 22. In a subsequent discussion with Officers of the Visual Arts section, we were informed that jury members would be instructed to recommend what is being referred to *adjustments* of up to 20% without applying the Fair Notice Policy that has been the approved and historical practice at Council up until now.

ARCA appreciates the challenges that Council faces in responding to the increased demands coming from organisations in all disciplines. However, as a national association, we value every organisation in our network. In our view, considering « adjustments » that would reduce operating budgets by up to 20% , or even encouraging such adjustments does not constitute a viable solution for a problem that we are all facing as arts driven organisations. In fact, allowing reductions in funding of up to 20% undermines, rather than consolidates this invaluable program especially in view of the diminishing access to complementary project funding. It is essential that ARCA be in a position to inform its constituents of changes that will potentially affect their operating funding on such short notice.

It is also important for ARCA to take active part in the process of the change agenda and economic development as a full partner. For this reason, ARCA is requesting a meeting with you, the Director, and, if possible, one or more board members, and the new Head of Visual Arts so that we can start examining some of the strategies that ARCs have already developed in response to the changing economy, and how these practices may reflect, and even inform the changes that Council desires.

ARCA will contact your office to schedule a meeting early in the new year, or as soon as the new Head of Visual Arts is in post.

Sincerely,

Todd Janes
President,
ARCCC-CCCAA

Anne Bertrand
Director,
ARCCC-CCCAA

c.c. : Bob Sirman, Director
Michel Gaboury, Office, Visual Arts Section
